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## B-1B flies second milestone sortie

by Maj. Jim Young B-1 System Program Office

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Air Force photo

A Global Power Bomber Combined Test Force crew, flying a B-1B Lancer at Edwards AFB, Calif., set an Air Force benchmark Monday for the third time in the past two months.

The crew successfully targeted three different weapon types against four separate targets in a single, 20-second bomb pass, including precision, or “smart” weapons. This accomplishment follows similar tests on May 2, which involved only non-precision gravity weapons, and June 6, in which three versions of the wind corrected munitions dispensers (CBU-103, CBU-104, and CBU-105) were released.

B-1B Lancer set an Air Force benchmark at Edwards AFB, Calif., successfully targeting three different weapon types against four separate targets in a single, 20-second bomb pass.

Part of the B-1 Block E Computer Upgrade Test Program, the effort further showcased the system’s new weapons flexibility as the crew released one GBU-31 joint direct attack munition (JDAM-2,000-pound global positioning system guided weapon), one MK-82 (500-pound gravity weapon), and two CBU-105 wind corrected munitions dispensers (WCMD-1,000-pound class inertially guided cluster munitions). Each weapon struck a separate target ranging from 300 to 4,000 feet apart.

“While the earlier non-precision weapons flexibility test allowed employment of multiple weapon types against three, separated targets, the aircraft was still required to over fly each of the targets,” said Lt. Col. Arnie Bunch, Global Power Bomber CTF director. “And each weapon type was limited to a relatively small target area. With guided weapons, however, the crew was able to release the weapons ‘off-axis, and the weapons were able to spread out and strike a larger number of targets over a wider area.”

First fielded in 1986, the B-1B was dedicated to a nuclear deterrence role. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the Air Force reassessed the nation’s bomber force and made a decision to focus the B-1 on a conventional war-fighting role.

In 1993, the Air Force initiated a series of phased upgrades, known collectively as the Conventional Mission Upgrade Program. CMUP is focused on increasing the B-1’s lethality, survivability, and sustainability in the conventional role.

“In delivering this latest capability,” said Col. Mike Miller, B-1 system program director, we are further strengthening the B-1’s ability to provide the nation with a

massive, penetrating, long-range precision attack capability, while ensuring the survival of the aircraft and its crew in a modern threat environment.”

The next step, in summer 2003, is to begin tests to integrate the joint standoff weapon and joint air-to-surface standoff missile on the B-1, which will add precision standoff capability.

“This is a tremendous addition to the B-1’s already-impressive arsenal,” said Col. Gregory Feest, Air Combat Command deputy director of requirements. “It will provide the joint force air component commander a B-1 capable of holding much larger target areas at risk and greatly enhancing his strike options.”

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